

School District of West Salem Resolution Regarding 2015-17 State Budget and School Funding

WHEREAS, Wisconsin has a long tradition of providing a high-quality public education system and investing in public education is an investment not only in our students' capacity for success beyond high school but an investment in economic development and the future of Wisconsin; and

WHEREAS, since the 1993-94 school year, school districts have been operating under state imposed revenue limits that cap the amount that schools can collect in state aid and local property taxes combined, and thus serve to limit school spending; and

WHEREAS, until recently, revenue limits have been increased annually at the rate of inflation to accommodate increases in costs to school districts and provide a stable and predictable annual increase for schools to use in budgetary planning; and

WHEREAS, Governor Walker's proposed 2015-17 state budget allows no increase in revenue limits in either the 2015-16 or 2016-17 school years; and

WHEREAS, with no increase in per pupil revenue limits, none of the additional state dollars proposed for K-12 education general aid (i.e. \$108 million in 2016-17) will go to classrooms, rather, it must instead be directed to reducing property taxes; and

WHEREAS, the budget proposal eliminates \$150 per pupil in per pupil aid in 2015-16, an immediate and actual cut of \$127 million public education funding statewide. Because this aid has been provided outside the revenue limit, districts have no authority to levy property taxes (i.e. cannot recapture) this lost aid; and

WHEREAS, the proposed budget includes additional funding for sparsity aid and high-cost pupil transportation aid targeted to rural school districts, not all rural school districts qualify for this aid and for those that do qualify, the amounts received are unlikely to offset the loss of per pupil aid in 2015-16; and

WHEREAS, the proposed budget also expands taxpayer subsidies to private voucher schools and independent charter schools, which will take additional money away from state general aid to school districts (on top of the cuts) and reduce opportunities for public school children; and

WHEREAS, the proposed budget provides an additional \$105.6 million in each year to increase the school levy tax credit, this money will be paid to municipalities not school districts and does not provide resources directly to schools. Although the name of this tax credit suggests it has something to do with money for schools, its only connection to school budgets is that it is calculated based on school levies; and

WHEREAS, Governor Walker and various legislators have made public comments in support of increasing funding for public schools if additional state revenue is available after April tax collections are counted;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the West Salem Board of Education calls upon Senator Jennifer Shilling and Representative Steve Doyle to work with their legislative colleagues to support increased funding for public education in the current budget for the benefit of Wisconsin's future and for the benefit of all public school students.